2:Maretzki & Maretzki E-5 (1954-1955) 1963 AC7 Okinawa AC7
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home country. Nevertheless, many aspects of Okinawan life still suggest an earlier phase in which independent developments gave the islands their own particular culture.

The Okinawan people, approximately 655,000 as counted in 1954, live in an area of about 454 square miles. Their major economic activities have traditionally been agriculture and fishing. In 1945 a long, peaceful existence was brought to an abrupt end during the final battles of World War II in the Pacific. As a result of world conditions Okinawans have been placed under American administration for an indefinite period of time. Today large numbers of men—and some women—find employment as unskilled and semiskilled laborers with the American forces. Gradual training for highly skilled jobs widens these opportunities for employment. Indirectly Okinawan life is influenced by Americans through stimulation of trade, building, and improved health conditions. Land requirements of the American forces in some areas also have influenced the settlement pattern. While these changes have affected the entire island to some degree, the greatest changes are noticeable in the central part around Naha where American administrative and military personnel are located. The village of Taira in the northern province of Kunigami, where the present study was located, had been subject to relatively few of these postwar changes in 1954. Isolated since earliest times because of mountainous terrain, this part of the island participates, as it probably always did, marginally in cultural influences which affect the center of the island. A great deal of cultural stability has therefore been preserved until the present day.

Nevertheless, it is useful to remember that the population of northern Okinawa is linked with the rest of the island by an efficient communications system. Roads connect almost all settlements in the north with the central island, and a bus transportation system extends its service into the remote areas. But long before all villages were connected by road with the center of Okinawa, people of Kunigami province traveled by foot over the many trails which traverse the mountains, and, since the turn of the century, many have left their home villages. Some went to Japan as laborers; others settled in the Japanese-controlled Islands of the Pacific, and some families joined the numerous Okinawan settlements in South American countries.

LANGUAGE

Taira people are bilingual. Okinawan, which linguists consider a separate language, has many regional dialects, some of which are not

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is one of the rare, desired body attributes. It was the opinion of some that the descendants of the noble families who came from Shuri, however, are taller and slender, with a prominent, curved nasal ridge.

Until they feel confident in the presence of strangers, Taira people appear quiet and restrained. It is considered a virtue not to show one's emotions, and Tairans consider the expressiveness of Americans childish. Actually they are gay, talkative, and given to laughter, especially the women. Men are quiet unless stimulated by alcohol, but both men and women may lose their composure in emergencies. A notable exception is their placid reactions to the threat of disaster from the ever recurrent violent storms.

THE COMMUNITY, ITS HISTORY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Taira is one of the northern villages on the northeast coast of Okinawa in Higashi township (see map 1). Today it is home to over 700 people who make their living—as did their ancestors since early times—from the surrounding fields, forests, and from the sea. The Okinawan name for the village, Taira, means "sloping fields." The character used for writing the prevalent Japanese version, Taira, means "flat, plain, good."

Since the family records were lost during World War II, it is necessary to depend on oral traditions for reconstruction of the history of Taira. Unfortunately, the desire of many Okinawans to establish a relationship between their local families and the former royal courts casts some doubt on the accuracy of these traditions.

According to these traditions, the first village to be settled in the vicinity of Taira was the neighboring community Kawata. After the Hokuzan kingdom in Nakijin (on the northwestern Motobu Peninsula) was conquered by the southern Okinawan kingdom of Chuzan in the fifthteenth century (Kerr, 1958:85), the second son of the Lord of Hokuzan is said to have escaped northward into Kunigami province. Unitokogami, the fleeing nobleman, arrived near the present site of Kawata and established himself in a cave around the year 1477. He is still revered today as founder of the village in a yearly spring ceremony when prayers are said in front of the cave. The oldest Taira families trace their descent in the male line from Nizenya, the "main house," he founded. Taira was settled around 1550 by two families tracing descent from this "main house." The descendents of these settlers are

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the community is dispersed. In the outlying parts, as far as 2 miles from the center (see map 1), the houses are scattered between the paddies or farm lands in sections which form subvillages or wards. As mentioned above, settlers from the south took up residence in these areas. Recently families from the main village have also moved to the more remote parts of the community, such as Udenaha, because they can reach their fields more conveniently. Although the name Taira refers to the political unit of main village and outlying parts, including Udenaha and Izena, most references in this study pertain only to the central community. Its 60 households, with about 330 individuals, form the primary social unit from which the sample of 24 children was chosen.

Central Taira nestles along the inner shore of Taira Bay, which opens into the Pacific Ocean. At this point the median range mountains recede from the coastline. Behind the village, rice paddies spread in a crazed pattern at the bottom and on the terraced sides of several valleys which are separated from each other by sparsely wooded hills. Here and there the red earth of an eroded section shows like a scab through the green slopes.

In traveling by road from the south, most people choose the highway along the East China Sea coast, which is connected with the road which crosses the island. Higashi township is entered through a low saddle in the mountains which separate the two coastlines. To the right and left begins Taira's forest. Central Taira is reached through a winding lane bordered by pine trees. To the left the view opens into one of the neatly cultivated rice fields, backed by the hills on whose flat tops and terraced sides village people cultivate their farm lands.

The central village itself lies on a sand bluff, separating the valley from the ocean, so that there is a slight drop toward both sides (see map 2). The main road runs the length of the village. Except for the thoroughfare, which is dirt and gravel, the side roads are not surfaced, and after heavy rains puddles form and remain for more than a day, to the delight of children who play in them.

When Taira was destroyed during World War II, along with its houses went much of the foliage which once served as a windbreak. A few fukugi trees * line the main street, and hibiscus hedges here and there hide some of the houses from a first inspection. There are bushes around the edges of the village.

The war-time destruction is hardly apparent on a first walk through the village. Along the main street, lined by houses, one finds the rice mill, a substantial new building of concrete and wood, the police sta-

* A small- to medium-sized evergreen tree with a narrow, upright, very dark green crown of leaves.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 377]

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PREFACE

114 This report is based on nine months of field research which was con-
122 ducted under the auspices of the Pacific Science Board of the National Academy of Sciences with Department of Army funds granted by a subcontract with the Human Resources Research Office of The George Washington University. The project was considered a part of the long-range SIRI (Scientific Investigations in the Ryukyu Islands) program developed by the Pacific Science Board "...to advise and assist the administrative authorities of the Ryukyu Islands in problems of rehabilitation relating to the health and economy of the Ryukyu
121 Islands." The objectives of this study were set forth in a broad outline presented by the Pacific Science Board prior to our departure into the field. In brief, it called for a description and assessment of the impact of the United States military occupation on Okinawan culture. Certain aspects of the project outline were later amended to meet the exigencies of the field situation. In the preparation of this report the authors' primary aim has been to inform those actively concerned with Okinawan-American relations; hence, a time limitation largely imposed by the necessity of presenting information while it is still pertinent has precluded a fuller treatment of certain aspects of our data which ordinarily would have been included in a complete ethnographic account.

114 Field time covered the period from September of 1953 to June of 1954.
● 101 One of the authors remained on Okinawa for an additional month to compensate for time lost due to illness and hospitalization.

128 Although each of us worked on several aspects of culture, in writing up our material we divided it roughly according to the major field of interest of each. Thus, though each chapter, or section of the last chapter, bears the name of the writer only, it was written from an outline that was discussed by all three and all three contributed both data and ideas to it.

We have tried to keep Okinawan and Japanese terms to a minimum, that is to use them only when there is no clear English equivalent or to add them (usually parenthetically) only as linguistic evidence for the existence of an object, practice, or concept. Nevertheless, they will be found scattered throughout the report. Although each term is defined, we hope, where it first appears, we have identified each again in a glossary. The distinction between native Okinawan terms and Japanese terms is worth preserving; we have done so by underlining the Okinawan terms and enclosing the Japanese terms in single quote marks. Some inconsistency in the Okinawan terms is due to differences in dialect and differences in recording.

101 Although we spent a bit of time in a number of communities on Okinawa, the major part of our work was in six: Pitts in Nanahan (Tomoyose), Kochinda-son, Goeku-son; Lebra in Kanegusuku, Kanegusuku-son and Kitazato, Kamimotobu-son; and Suttles in Yamazato, Chinen-son and Yamada, Onna-son. The locations of these communities is shown on Map 1.

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102

Map 1
[facing p. ii]

195 A munchu was made up of a number
197 of households or families united through the male line, descended from a common
[619] ancestor, and sharing a common tomb. Village endogamy was an obligatory mar-
[582] riage practice and violations did not pass unpunished; in addition kin group
endogamy was a preferred practice, though not necessarily an obligatory one.
[628] Intervillage contacts and ties, consequently, were held to a minimum. These cus-
[178] toms were followed by the majority of the oldest generation now living, and
even today such practices tend to persist in rural areas. A survey in Kane-gu-
[582] suku revealed that fifty percent of the marriages were between members of the
same kin group and sixty-six percent of the marriages were between residents of
[178] the same village. Such practices, to be sure, are breaking down, and this be-
comes evident when the above data are analyzed on an age basis, but in view of
the fact that these customs still prevail, though to a more limited extent than
formerly, it is not surprising that so considerable a diversity of dialects
should also be preserved.

197 Another facet of Okinawan dialect geography is the occurrence of small
621 speech-islands exhibiting dialects distinct from those of the surrounding areas.
194 These are the so called yaadui settlements founded during the 18th and 19th cen-
turies by migrants from the Naha-Shuri area; the newcomers were usually the
younger sons of gentry families seeking their livelihood in the country. Such
settlements not only enjoyed a political independence from the larger surround-
ing communities but also were never incorporated into the formal religious
system centering on the nuru priestess and unifying the rural areas. These
factors together with previously-mentioned marriage practices enabled such set-
tlements to preserve their identity. Kitazato in Kami Motobu-son serves as a
good example of this type of village, having been settled seven generations
ago by the younger sons of gentry families residing in Naha and Shuri. The
larger neighboring villages never absorbed Kitazato, and to this day it pre-
[194] serves a dialect quite distinct from theirs. The most notable contrast be-
tween them centers on the p and h sounds in the two dialects, for all p sounds
of nearby Gushiken are rendered h in Kitazato; thus, the word for "fire" is pi
in the dialect of the former and hi in the latter's.

197 Undoubtedly this dialectic diversity is decreasing as the old customs
178 die out and the isolation of the village disappears. The war uprooted many
communities and scattered their inhabitants about the island, and nearly all
villages now have a number of families new to the village since the war. New
communities like the entertainment center of Koza have no characteristic dia-
lect of their own, containing as they do a heterogeneous population recruited
from all parts of the Ryukyus. The vast improvements in roads and transporta-
tion services since the end of the war have given the people a mobility un-
dreamed of in the prewar period and have done much to destroy the isolation of
the rural areas.

192 "Uchinaaguchi" Okinawans call their dialect uchinaaguchi and themselves
[101] uchinaanchu. The terms 'Okinawago', Japanese for Okinawan
language, and 'hōgen', Japanese for dialect, are also in common usage though
the latter term is resented by some who feel that it carries the connotation
"rustic". Today all Okinawan speech contains many loan words from Japanese;
this obtains for those who know no Japanese as well as for those who are bi-
lingual. Intimate contact with Japanese coupled with this word borrowing has

mean the same thing, village, although the term 'aza' tends to be geographical in connotation whereas 'ku' refers more to the political community. Official land maps use the designation 'aza' and the same term is used for one's postal address. Conversely, the 'koseki' (household registry) kept in the township office is labelled as the 'koseki' of a certain 'ku', and the political head or mayor of a village is referred to as the 'kuchō' ('ku' leader or head). The villagers never use the term 'ku' in referring to their village; instead the terms 'aza', mura, or 'buraku' are used. The township of Kanegusuku-son located in southern Okinawa approximately three miles south of Naha on the west coast is subdivided into eight villages or 'aza', each of these comprising a separate settlement surrounded by its fields. 621

Every 'aza' consists of a number of haru (cognate to the Japanese hara) which best translates as "field". Kanegusuku, one of the eight villages of Kanegusuku-son and the one from which it takes its name, consists of eight haru, though the number in a given village is completely arbitrary. These haru or fields are local designations for the various areas of a village and are well known to all the villagers. The haru names are fairly similar from village to village throughout Okinawa though occasionally local geographical features or place names, particularly those of streams, are used. Names like wii haru (upper field), agari baru (east field), iri baru (west field), kushi baru (back field), mee baru (front field), shicha baru (lower field) are found in nearly every village. It is interesting to note that the names north field and south field rarely occur, and where they do occur, the author suspects that they have been put in use quite recently, for in the old, typical Okinawan village all of the houses face south, and the field names are usually ordered around this orientation. Thus, mee baru (front field) is usually south of the village while kushi baru (back field) is usually on the north side. This carries over into the household naming system (yago) employed by the villagers to designate each of the house lots within the settlement. 621 103

Each haru is broken into many small parcels or plots of land. On the village land maps every plot is assigned to one of six categories---house or building land, irrigated land, dry farm land, grass land, forest land, and miscellaneous, including tomb land. Each plot is also given a number on the land maps and in the land registry ('tochi daichō') for the purpose of identification, though oftentimes the villagers refer to them by local names. 621 311 [423]

2. Political Organization[1]

There are three levels of government (exclusive of military government) existing on Okinawa today---the central government (Government of the Ryukyu Islands), municipal governments ('shi-chō-son'), and 'ku' (ward or village) governments. The structure of government is pyramidal, there is a hierarchial chain of command, and each echelon of government exceeds in authority the unit immediately below it. There is no allocation of rights and powers as exists among the various national, state, and local segments of American government, since the state operates as a highly-organized and heavily centralized unitary whole. Variation in the form and function of local government from one area to another is slight. Individuals appear to play but a small role in this 642 [634]

[1] A major part of the information presented in this chapter derives from the author's study in the township of Kanegusuku-son and particularly in one of its villages, Kanegusuku-ku. This has been supplemented by data gathered in briefer studies in other parts of Okinawa. 101